

Creating Violence Free and Coercion Free
Mental Health Treatment Environments for the
Reduction of Seclusion and Restraint

*The Experience of Seclusion and
Restraint*



Module created by Lane, Bluebird, Jorgenson, 2003

The experiences shared in this module are real, first-hand experiences of what it's like to experience restraint and seclusion. When this curriculum was first being developed, the value of including such experiences was apparent. Using the Internet and various listserves, we ask for people living with psychiatric disabilities to share their stories. The response was overwhelming. We wanted to honor people's privacy and anonymity, some of those sharing their story wanted their names used. So, we honor all these brave individuals who shared these stories.

As we refined this portion of the training, we realized the experiences of restraint and seclusion extend well beyond the person being restrained or secluded. These events have a profound impact on direct care staff, particularly those involved in the incidents. These events have a profound affect on those who observe another being restrained or put into seclusion. Experiences of direct care staff are included in this module, in their own words. We honor these people, too.

Finally, we have included stories of persons with psychiatric disabilities who experienced compassion and caring from some mental health professionals after having been restrained or secluded.

All of these stories of personal experiences of coercive treatment; from the perspective of those who have been put in restraints or secluded and from the perspective of those who have participated in putting someone in restraints or in a seclusion.

These are experiences of coercive treatments.

Any work used from this document should be referenced as follows:

“National Executive Training Institute (NETI). (2005). *Training curriculum for reduction of seclusion and restraint. Draft curriculum manual*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), National Technical Assistance Center for State Mental Health Planning (NTAC)”

**Any questions in relation to this work
can be sent to:**

- Kevin Huckshorn
Kevinurse@aol.com
- Janice Lebel Janice.Lebel@dmh.state.ma.us
- Nan Stromberg
nan.stromberg@dmh.state.ma.us

The Experience of Seclusion and Restraint

“Eight men jumped on me and wrestled me to the floor. They held me face-down on the floor, restrained me, and then shot me up [with] Thorazine. I then waited in restraints for hours until they thought my behavior was appropriate to be released. I remember begging with them like a dog to release me. I was totally powerless and at their mercy...As a survivor of sexual abuse, I personally have found the use of restraints on me more traumatizing than being sexually assaulted. Being put in restraints is a much longer, traumatic ordeal than being raped.”

Marcia Kelly

(Lane et al., 2002)

4

Read slide

The Experience of Seclusion and Restraint

"I was restrained for the wrong reason. I did not put my hands on anyone. And once in restraints, I was kept locked up after I was calm."

Janice Hatala, age 14

(LeBel, J., Stromberg, N., (2004) Experiences of S/R. Unpublished Papers)

5

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

“I had never seen such a thing...a blue mattress with restraints. They strapped me in face down. I have a memory that they also gave me an injection, but that might have been from another time. I remember whispering to the nurse, ‘What happens now?’...I was petrified because all their behavior and equipment seemed so weird. She said, ‘Just try to sleep.’”

Grace Nichols

(Lane et al., 2002)

6

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

“One of the things that doesn’t get talked about very much is the trauma of the staff. We talk about the trauma paradigm for our clients or people in recovery. But not very often in my 20 years of work in the field of mental health have I heard much about what happens to us, the workers and I think that’s an area where we need to do some work. I’ve seen some pretty traumatic things from when I first started 20 years ago. Some of those things still haunt me that I’ve seen.” female direct care staff

(Jorgenson et al., in press)

7

Read slide

The Experience of Seclusion and Restraint

"I hated it. You people need to do better. Time of getting held does not mean you go straight to the restraint bed. You know me better than that. I hate the restraint bed. It makes me think of my past. How some things happened to my mom. You people do not understand that talking about your past can be very hard to do. I am sorry if I hurt any staff but you all know me. I do not mean to hurt you."

Gail Ward, age 12

(LeBel, J., Stromberg, N., (2004) Experiences of S/R. Unpublished Papers)

8

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

SEQUELAE

*Male direct care staff:
I've been injured from time to time. Nothing
severe. Yeah, sometimes I get headaches. I get
shaky.*

9

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

"I spent six days with one arm twisted behind my head. This was done, I was told, 'to teach me a lesson.' Hopefully my lessons will serve others. For perhaps more than a decade anger and hate were constant companions." Bob Bennett

(Lane, 2002)

10

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

HORRIBLE

“The first time that I helped with a restraint, a four-point restraint, I walked out of the room in tears because it was one of the most horrible things I had ever seen.” female direct care staff

(Jorgenson et al., in press)

11

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

“When I was restrained, it was the culmination of escalated situations based on my feeling totally without choices, and not in control at all. [However,] it became a ‘war of words’ all about who had the power. I was restrained and forcibly injected. I did not speak to anyone for the next two days, and developing any sort of trusting relationship was seriously delayed.” Tom Lane

(Lane et al., 2002)

12

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

“Sometime later in the hospital I was told it was time for my Prolyxn shot without any prior preparation. I knew what the medication would do to me, so I resisted. At this time, I was already frightened of this whole situation of being the hospital. I decided if they kept me any longer, I would resist to no end and in my delusion I expected it to lead to a lobotomy and I was sure it was already over when they grabbed me.”

Patrick K., 26 yr old

13

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

Female direct care staff:

I know that after a couple of difficult incidents on a unit, I certainly felt like I had symptoms of PTSD, about being hyper-aware when I walked to my car, because some of the things that I saw and that I was involved with were very traumatic. I think consumers talk about what it is like to be in restraints, it is also traumatizing to put people in restraints in the same way that I think it is traumatizing for soldiers to go to war and kill other people. We don't often talk about the impact of that either.

14

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

“When you get to that point you feel as though you have failed. It seems like you’ve missed something when you could have prevented it beforehand. I never liked doing that, but it’s about maintaining safety and you just never want that to happen....you feel like you’ve failed. There’s always something you could have seen earlier if you had been there a little sooner, if you had known the client a little better. You could have prevented the situation.”

male direct care staff

(Jorgenson et al., in press)

15

Read slide

The Experience of Seclusion and Restraint

"I got put in the quiet room for pulling the alarm. I pulled the alarm because my grandma did not visit with me so I felt really bad and did not know what to do."

Robert Johnson, age 10

(LeBel, J., Stromberg, N., (2004) Experiences of S/R. Unpublished Papers)

16

Read slide

The Experience of Coercive Treatment

“The first time that I helped with a restraint, a four-point restraint, I walked out of the room in tears because it was one of the most horrible things I had ever seen.” female direct care staff

(Jorgenson et al., in press)

17

Read slide

The Experience of Seclusion and Restraint

“When I got in restraints it was because I saw another peer getting restrained. I didn’t like the way they were treating her and got mad and tried to help her. The staff grabbed me—two males at first—then there were more, up to six or seven—that threw me on the bed. They put my knee in my face. After that they pulled my hair to keep my head down, and I told him, ‘Don’t grab my hair’.” He said, “You’re retarded.” I told him, “Don’t call me retarded—you’re not my Daddy!” He told me, “You don’t even know your Daddy!” After that I was left on my on my stomach in 4 point restraints for three hours. I had to beg to get out of restraints to use the bathroom. Another time, a man jumped on my back and I couldn’t breathe.

Adolescent, age 16 (LeBel, J., Stromberg, N., (2004) Experiences of S/R. Unpublished Papers)

18

Read slide

The Value of Compassion

“She asked if I would be safe if she took off the restraints, and I said yes. She said, ‘Well that is a good safe.’” When she took the restraints off of my wrists and legs I was unable to move my right hand and shoulder. It was very swollen. She couldn’t believe how swollen I was and immediately called for medical attention. It was her passion and conviction about the fact that I had not received any medical attention. She was screaming to whoever it was. Then she got me up and helped me take a shower and got me food. In her face I could see that she cared for me and also in her voice.”

Sharon Gregory

19

Read slide

The Value of Compassion

“It was a Palm Sunday and I wanted to go to Mass. It was a Catholic hospital. The nurse let me go though she knew that I was expressing suicidal thoughts. When I came back one and a half hours later I was put in seclusion. The nurse did not talk to me. Nobody talked to me. I was on a little mat in the room. When my doctor (psychiatrist) came back two days later after being gone on a long weekend, he was furious. He talked to the nurse and told her, “You had no right doing that.” He got me out of seclusion. He then spent time with me.”

Diane Cote

20

Read slide

IN MEMORIAM

- Michelle Sutton
- Kristen Chase
- Paul Choy
- Aaron Bacon
- Dawnne Takeuchi
- Lorenzo Johnson
- Carlos Ruiz
- John Vincent Garrison
- Bernard Reefer
- Robert Zimmerman
- Charles Lucas
- James Lamb

21

We take a few moments to silently reflect and honor those people who will never know the joy of a prom, or of dating, or of marriage, or of a successful career, or of growing old.

IN MEMORIAM

- Tammy Edmiston
- Leon Anger
- Charles Collins, Jr.
- Jamie Young
- John Avila
- Danny Lewis
- Nicholas Contreras
- Edith Campos
- Matt Toppi
- Chris Brown
- Eric David Schibley
- Chad Andrew Frenza

IN MEMORIAM

- Robert Doyle Erwin
- Lyle Foodroy
- Gina Score
- Bryan Dale Alexander
- Michael Wiltsie
- Tristan Sovern
- Robert Rollins
- Anthony Haynes
- Ian August
-and Counting